

FAUNAL ASSEMBLAGES FROM THE SCIOTO RIVER DRAINAGE (1500 B.C. — A.D. 1300)

by
Jonathan E. Bowen
11891 ECR 24
Republic, OH 44867

This report summarizes the faunal assemblages from four prehistoric sites in the Scioto River drainage of south-central Ohio. They are:

- 1 - The Scioto County Home (33SC 17) Late Archaic (ca. 1500 B.C.) site, along the Ohio River west of Portsmouth, in Scioto County (Bowen 1987; Kuhn 1986, 1987; Sciulli et al 1988). This sample was obtained through screening with 1/4 inch mesh, with some flotation.
- 2 - The Hopewell (ca. A.D. 200's) midden at the base of Seip Mound 1, also known as the Pricer Mound, along Paint Creek east of Bainbridge, in Ross County (Shetrone and Greenman 1931). This collection is curated at the Ohio Historical Society. It is likely that this sample consists of what was visible during hand excavation.
- 3 - The Zencor (33FR8) Late Woodland (A.D. 600's) site, along the Scioto River on South High Street in Columbus, Franklin County. This assemblage was excavated by Ray Baby in the late 1950's (see Seeman and Dancey 2000). The sample, curated at the Ohio Historical Society, was screened through 1/4 inch mesh.
- 4 - The later occupation (c.a. A.D. 1300) at the Feurt village site (33SC6) of the Fort Ancient culture (Gehlbach 2010; Kuhn 1998; Mills 1917), along the Scioto River north of Portsmouth, in Scioto County. This collection, curated at the Ohio Historical Society, differs from the others in that all of the deposits were subjected to flotation. This means that virtually all non-microscopic remains should be present in the assemblage. Analyses of the fish and clam samples, which contain about 20 species each, are ongoing, and will be the topics of separate reports. Also, this report uses only about 1/3 of the available sample, as it is still being processed.

The faunal assemblages from these four sites are summarized in Table 1. To make the numbers comparable, they have been adjusted to as if there were 100 deer (the most abundant species) per sample. I prefer to deal with samples which contain the remains of at least 25 individual deer; to me, any with less are quite likely to suffer from sampling error. Thus, I want to emphasize that the Scioto County Home sample is small, and that from the Pricer (Seip 1) Mound midden is tiny. However, I include them because Ohio Late Archaic faunal assemblages are rare, and the Pricer/Seip 1 sample is the best available from that famous site.

Raccoon remains are more than three times more abundant in the Late Archaic Scioto County Home sample than in any of the others. Although higher, this still suggests that for every 10 deer harvested, only about four raccoon were being taken. On the other hand, turkeys are more than three times scarcer in the Scioto Home sample. Maybe they made up in raccoons what they lacked in turkeys. Also, clams are extremely abundant.

It gives me more confidence in the Hopewell Pricer/Seip 1 assemblage in that it is similar to the slightly later early Late Woodland Zencor sample, which was very carefully collected. The only real difference that I see is the lack of turtles at Pricer/Seip 1. This supports the hypothesis of continuity between Hopewellian and early Late Woodland subsistence practices.

The Feurt sample is the only one of these four that was deposited by people who grew corn. It is not, however, radically different from the earlier three. The proportion of turkeys is elevated, which is typical for Fort Ancient culture faunal assemblages. Box turtles are twice as abundant at Feurt. The proportion of fish remains is higher, but not remarkably so, given the extreme care taken in processing the deposits.

All in all, the picture given by these four samples is one of general continuity in the harvesting of animal resources, except for clams.

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type of animal (for comparability, the values are adjusted as if there were 100 individual deer in each sample)	Scioto County Home 1500 BC (14 deer)	Pricer (Seip 1) Mound basal midden AD 200's (8 deer)	Zencor AD 600's (26 deer)	Feurt (latest occupation) AD 1300 (32 deer)
white-tail deer	100	100	100	100
elk	-	-	4	9
black bear	-	-	4	12
raccoon	43	13	8	12
beaver	7	13	8	3
muskrat	-	-	-	3
squirrel	-	-	8	6
gray fox	-	-	12	3
wolf	7	-	-	3
opossum	7	-	-	9
woodchuck	-	-	-	3
wild turkey	7	25	24	39
large waterfowl	7	-	-	6
small waterfowl	-	-	-	3
pass. pigeon	-	-	-	3
other birds	7	13	8	21
box turtle	14	-	16	36
painted turtle	7	-	4	6
snapping turtle	7	-	4	6
softshell turtle	7	-	4	12
fish	112	13	20	170
clams	28,000	13	16	885

Table 1 (Bowen) Faunal Assemblages from the Scioto River Drainage. (minimum numbers of individuals)